

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-6 and 8-15 remain pending in the application.

No new issues are raised, nor is further search required, as a result of the amendments made herein. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Examiner enter the Amendment.

**Claims 1-6, 8-10 and 12 over Koyama and Shepherd**

In the Office Action, claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 5,894,505 to Koyama ("Koyama") in view of U.S. Pat. Publ. No. 2002/0051528 A1 to Shepherd ("Shepherd"); and claims 4-6, 8-10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Shepherd in view of Koyama. The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claims 1-3 recite an **analog** telephone line interface, and a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of an **analog non-ring signal** initiated by a caller utilizing the **analog** telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call. Claims 4-6 and 8-10 recite receiving an **analog** non-ring signal initiated by a caller at an **analog** telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call, and answering the incoming call without an audible ring. Claims 12-15 recite providing an **analog** ring signal bypass module in a voice messaging system, activating the **analog** ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party, and bypassing an audible ring signal.

The Examiner agrees that Koyama fails to teach a non-ring signal, indicating that "Koyama fails to disclose directing the incoming call without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the system." (Office Action at 3) However, The Examiner cites Shepherd to cure this serious, important deficiency.

In particular, the Examiner cites Shepherd for allegedly teaching "directing the incoming call without an audible ring signal (paragraph 41, line 6 "line reversal") to announce the incoming call by the system (paragraph 41)[The

no-ring detector respond to a line reversal to answer the call.]” (Office Action at 3)

Shepherd teaches a DIGITAL telephone system utilizing DIGITAL telephone line interfaces utilizing Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) interfaces. (See, e.g., Shepherd, paras. 7 and 0024) The particular paragraph 41 that the Examiner cites relates to the reception of a DIGITAL C7 IFAM message by a DIGITAL telephone over a DIGITAL ISDN interface. See, e.g., the requirement that the telephone be connected to a local digital switch 1 via an ISDN link of the kind having at least one data channel in addition to a voice channel. (Sheperd, para. 0034, liens 3-4). Later in that same paragraph, it is explained that in response to the C7 IFAM message, the local digital switch responds with an ISDN set up message by way of the data channel.

Sheperd relates to the transmission of digital messages within a digital channel of a digital telephone line interface. Neither Sheperd, nor Koyama (as the Examiner agrees) discloses, teaches or suggests receipt of an analog non-ring signal as required by all pending claims.

Moreover, the combination of Koyama’s analog telephone answering machine with functions and features of a digital ISDN system is non-sensical. At best, it would result in an analog telephone answering machine that could receive a digital C7 IFAM message in a data channel as taught by Sheperd. More realistically, it is respectfully submitted that the combination is improper as it relates to the claims of the present invention, which are focused on an analog telephone line approach.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-6 and 8-10 are patentable over the prior art of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

**Claims 11 and 13-15 over Shepherd, Koyama and Borland**

Claims 11 and 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Shephard in view of Koyama, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,128,382 to Borland et al. (“Borland”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 11 and 13-15 are dependent on claims 8 and 12, respectively, and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 8 and 12. In particular, neither Shepherd, Koyama, nor even Borland disclose, teach or suggest receipt of an **analog** non-ring signal as required by claims 11 and 13-15.

Regarding the additional limitations of dependent claim 11, claim 11 recites receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system.

As discussed above, neither Koyama nor Sheperd, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest receiving an analog non-ring signal, much less such an analog non-ring signal initiated by a caller at an analog telephone line interface, as recited by claim 11.

The Office Action relies on Borland to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Shepherd and Koyama to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

Borland appears to disclose a telephone system that enables a caller to leave a message on a telephone without the telephone first generating a ring sound (Abstract). According to Borland, a telephone receives an incoming telephone call from a caller, and if a ring/message option feature is enabled, the telephone answers the incoming call prior to the telephone generating a ring sound and allows the caller to then leave a message (Borland, Abstract). The telephone includes a ring/message option switch that is a toggle switch for turning the ring/message option feature on and off (Borland, col. 4, lines 51-54). Alternately, the ring/message feature is activated and deactivated by lifting handset and entering a numeric code using the telephone keypad (Borland, col. 4, lines 55-59).

Borland requires the **owner** of a customer premises equipment to either press a button or lift a handset and enter a numeric code to activate the no ring answering machine. An **owner** of a customer premises equipment activating a no ring answering machine is **NOT** receiving a non-ring signal **initiated by a**

caller at a telephone line interface, much less receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller at a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claim 11.

Neither Koyama, Sheperd nor Borland, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest receiving a non-ring signal initiated by a caller by a telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to a voice messaging system and answering the incoming call by the voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce the incoming call by the voice messaging system, as recited by claim 11.

Claims 13-15 recite, *inter alia*, activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system.

As discussed above, neither Koyama nor Sheperd, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system, as recited by claims 13-15.

The Office Action relies on Borland to allegedly make up for the deficiencies in Shepherd and Koyama to arrive at the claimed invention. The Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed above, Borland requires the owner of a customer premises equipment to either press a button or lift a handset and enter a numeric code to activate the no ring answering machine. Activating a ring bypass module based on a request from an owner of a customer premises equipment is **NOT** activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party, as recited by claims 13-15.

Neither Shepherd, Koyama nor Borland, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest activating a ring signal bypass module based on a request from a calling party and bypassing an audible ring signal

by a voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from a calling party to a voice messaging system, as recited by claims 13-15.

A benefit of allowing a calling party to initiate a ring bypass is, e.g., that important calls from a caller can still create a ringing announcement. Borland discloses a system allows an owner of a voice messaging system to bypass a ring signal. When a button or code is entered, all calls to the voice messaging system will activate a ring bypass module and not create a ringing announcement. However, important calls where the call must reach the owner of the voice messaging system will also not ring through. Applicants' invention allows the calling party to control if the called party's voice messaging system will ring. Unimportant calls can activate a ring bypass module and important calls can be handled as conventional calls with a ringing announcement.

Accordingly, for at least all the above reasons, claims 11 and 13-15 are patentable over Koyama and Shepherd. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

#### **Conclusion**

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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William H. Bollman  
Reg. No. 36,457

**Manelli Denison & Selter PLLC**  
2000 M Street, NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036-3307  
TEL. (202) 261-1020  
FAX. (202) 887-0336